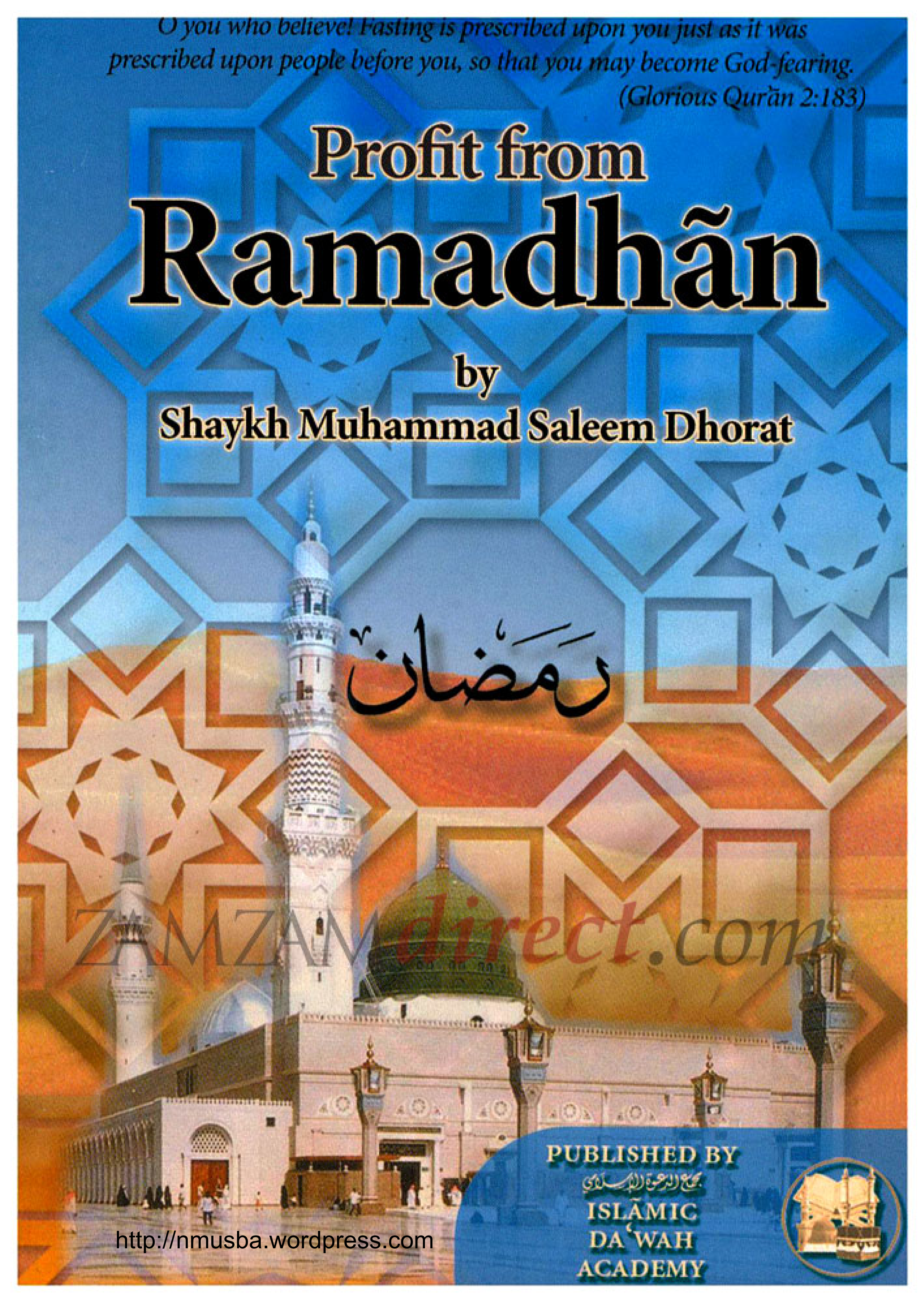

O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed upon you just as it was prescribed upon people before you, so that you may become God-fearing.
(Glorious Qur'ãn 2:183)
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Profit from Ramadhān

by

Shaykh Muhammad Saleem Dhorat



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FOREWORD

As is his usual practice at the beginning of Ramadhān each year, Shaykh Muhammad Saleem *hafizahullah* talks to his congregation about the blessings, virtues and benefits of the blessed month of Ramadhān, explaining how they should value this blessed month and spend it with utmost care in order to acquire the Nearness and Pleasure of Allah.

One of these talks was transcribed and published as two separate articles in the monthly journal, Riyāḍul Jannah, of which Shaykh is also founder and editor.

As Ramadhān 1420 approaches, it seemed an appropriate time to bring together these articles and publish them in the form of a booklet, thereby making these wise and beneficial advices available to a much wider audience.

We begin the booklet with another article of Shaykh entitled 'The Blessed Month of Ramadhān' and, on his instruction, include some important directives given by Shaykh Muhammad Badre 'Ālam ﷺ, a great scholar in the field of Hadeeth. The booklet finally concludes with rules regarding fasting, compiled by Shaykh himself and previously published and distributed as a leaflet and a colour poster (available free of charge from the Academy).

We ask Allah to give us the tawfeeq to adopt these advices so that we can all ***Profit from Ramadhān***, Āmeen.

Ismā'eel Dhorat
Rajab 1420 (October 1999)

THE BLESSED MONTH OF RAMADHĀN

Knowledge of the virtues and benefits of the blessed month of Ramadhān will develop the understanding of the value and importance of this month, which in turn will create enthusiasm and eagerness to make this month a fruitful one. For this reason, a few Ahādeeth of our beloved Rasool ﷺ are mentioned hereunder.

THE GREAT MONTH

O people, there comes upon you a great month, a most blessed month, in which lies a night greater in worth than one thousand months. Allah has made compulsory fasting in this month and has decreed wakefulness at night (i. e. tarāweeh) sunnah. Whosoever tries drawing nearer to Allah by performing any nafl (optional) deed in this month, for him shall be such reward as if he had performed a fardh in any other time of the year. And whoever performs a fardh, for him shall be the reward of seventy fardh in any other time of the year. This is indeed the month of patience, and the reward for true patience is Jannah; it is the month of sympathy with one's fellow men; it is the month wherein a true Believer's rizq (provision) is increased. (Ibne Khuzaymah)

The month of Ramadhān, the month of blessings has come to you, wherein Allah turns towards you and sends down to you His special Mercy, forgives your faults, accepts prayers, observes your competition for doing good deeds and boasts to the angels about you. So show to Allah your righteousness; for verily, the most pitiable and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's Mercy in this month. (Tabrāni)

The doors of Jannah are opened on the first night of Ramadhān. Not a single door is closed until the last night of Ramadhān. (Bayhaqi)

And in this month, four things you should endeavour to perform in great number; two of which shall be to please your Lord, while the other two shall be those without which you cannot make do. Those which shall be to please your Lord, are that you should in great quantity recite the Kalimah Tayyibah: *Lā ilāha illallāh*, and make much 'Istighfār' (beg Allah's Forgiveness). And as for those without which you cannot make do, you should beg Allah for entry into Jannah and seek refuge with Him from the fire of Jahannam. (Ibne Khuzaymah)

SUHOOR (SEHRI)

Verily, Allah and His Angels send mercy upon those who eat suhoor. (Tabrāni)

Eat suhoor because in suhoor lies barakah. (Mishkāt)

DAYS OF RAMADHĀN

The fishes in the sea seek forgiveness for those fasting until they break their fast. Allah decorates His Jannah every day and then says, 'The time is near when My pious Servants shall cast aside the great trials and come to me.' (Ahmad)

During each day and night of Ramadhān, Allah sets free great number of souls from Hell. And for every Muslim, during each day and night, at least one du'ā is certainly accepted. (Bazzāz)

SAWM (FASTING)

Sawm (Fasting) is a shield, as long as he (the fasting person) does not tear it up. (Nasa'ee)

NOTE: Fasting is a protection from Shaytān or from Allah's Punishment in the Hereafter. One who indulges in sins whilst fasting such as lies, backbiting etc., they become the cause of the fast becoming wasted.

All good deeds are for the one who renders them, but Fasting. Fasting is exclusively for Me (Allah). (Bukhāri)

Fasting is a shield and a powerful fortress. (Ahmad, Bayhaqi)

I swear by that Being in Whose Possession is the life of Muhammad! The odour of the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter to Allah than the fragrance of musk. (Bukhāri)

Fasting is exclusively for Allah, the reward of it (being limitless) no one knows besides Allah. (Tabrāni)

IFTĀR

Whosoever gives something to a fasting person in order to break the fast, for him there shall be forgiveness for his sins and emancipation from the fire of Jahannam; and for him (the one who gives) shall be the same reward as for him (whom he fed), without that person's (the one who was fed) reward being diminished in the least. (Ibne Khuzaymah, Bayhaqi)

Whoever gave a person, who fasted, water to drink, Allah shall give him a drink from my fountain where after he shall never again feel thirsty until he enters Jannah. (Ibne Khuzaymah)

The fasting person experiences two (occasions of) delight: at the time of iftār and at the time he will meet his Lord. (Bukhāri)

Not a single prayer made by a fasting person at the time of breaking fast is rejected. (Ibne Mājah)

NIGHTS OF RAMADHĀN

Whoever stands in prayer and worship in (the nights of) Ramadhān, with Imān and with sincere hope of gaining reward, all his previous sins are forgiven. (Bukhāri, Muslim)

Allah سبحانه وتعالى has ordained fasting in Ramadhān compulsory, and I have decreed (by the Command of Allah) wakefulness at night (that is tarāweeh, etc.) sunnah. Whoever in the state of Imān and with hope of gaining reward, fasts in Ramadhān and stays awake at night (tarāweeh), emerges from sin, purified as the day when his mother gave birth to him. (Nasa'ee)

For every Salāh performed during the nights of Ramadhān (that is tarāweeh, etc.), Allah سبحانه وتعالى records one and a half thousand good deeds for every sajdah (prostration). (Bayhaqi)

LAYLATUL QADR (NIGHT OF POWER)

Whoever stands in prayer and worship in the night of power with Imān and with sincere hope of gaining reward, all his previous sins are forgiven. (Muslim)

Look for the night of power among the odd numbered nights of the last ten days of Ramadhān. (Mishkāt)

IʻTIKĀF

It is related by Aboo Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that Rasoolullah ﷺ observed iʻtikāf for ten days every year in the month of Ramadhān. In the year he passed away he observed it for twenty days. (Bukhāri)

Those who observe (iʻtikāf) are prevented from all sins and they obtain reward as if they are rendering all good deeds. (Mishkāt)

He who observes the ten days of iʻtikāf during Ramadhān will obtain the reward of two Hajj and two ʻUmrah. (Bayhaqi)

LAST NIGHT OF RAMADHĀN

Rasoolullah ﷺ said, ʻOn the last night of Ramadhān the fasting Muslims are forgiven.ʼ The Sahābah رضي الله عنهم inquired, ʻO Rasoolullah ﷺ, is that the night of power?ʼ Nabee ﷺ replied, ʻNo! But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward on having completed his duty. ʼ (Ahmad) ۞

THE MONTH OF BLESSING, MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

It is reported in a Hadeeth that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, “When Ramadhān comes, the gates of Jannah are thrown open, the doors of Jahannam are closed and the Shayāteen are imprisoned. ” (Bukhāri)

From the three things mentioned in this Hadeeth, we can deduce that in the blessed month of Ramadhān, Allah سبحانه وتعالى makes the acquiring of Jannah and deliverance from the fire of Jahannam easy. This is the month of blessing, mercy and forgiveness. Each and every minute and second of Ramadhān sees mercies and blessings from Allah سبحانه وتعالى descending upon us; hundreds and thousands of people are forgiven and are honoured with freedom from Jahannam.

Obeying Allah سبحانه وتعالى and fulfilling His Commands becomes easy during this month. On ʻordinaryʼ days, the performance of two rakʻat nafl after ʻIshā Salāh seems difficult and tiresome. However, in Ramadhān, a person will still be eager to continue in Salāh despite having performed twenty rakʻāt of tarāweeh. This ease and desire are all from Allah سبحانه وتعالى, for He has made this month such that there is great eagerness to devote oneself to ʻibādah.

We can thus conclude that to gain Allah's Pleasure, save oneself from Jahannam and gain entry into Jannah (which should be the desire, ambition and objective of every Muslim), there is no better time than the month of Ramadhān. All that is required to reap the fruits of this month is to create in our hearts the desire, ambition, devotion, zeal and eagerness and that we exert effort to acquire the Pleasure of Allah ﷻ. With a combination of all these qualities within us, we should come to the Court of our Lord and Creator with the intention of acquiring His Pleasure, and put ourselves in prostration, shedding tears and asking for forgiveness. Inshā'allah, we have complete faith that we will be honoured with forgiveness very quickly.

SOME DIRECTIVES

With this in mind, through the teachings of our pious predecessors (in the light of the Qur'ān and Hadeeth), there are certain guidelines which, if followed properly, will make the month of Ramadhān fruitful for us, and all these precious moments will benefit us in both worlds, inshā'allah.

ABSTINENCE FROM SINS

The first thing that we should bear in mind is that in this blessed and valuable month we should not commit any act of disobedience to Allah. To

abstain from sin is an 'ibādah in itself. Just as the performance of two rak'āt of nafl is regarded an act of worship, abstaining from a sin when the opportunity presents itself is also an act of worship. For example, if one is confronted with a member of the opposite sex whilst walking in the streets and the nafs creates the urge to gaze, but self-control prevails and the gaze is lowered, this is an act of 'ibādah for which that person will be rewarded. We must take utmost care not to commit a single sin – major or minor – under any circumstances during the month of Ramadhān.

TWO ENEMIES

Shaytān and nafs are our archenemies who work to mislead us and both are very cunning. A critical look at our lives will reveal that we are normally only aware of the good deeds that we have performed; we tend to forget the evil ones. If a person was to sit down at the end of a day and evaluate whether he had spent his day doing good deeds or bad deeds, he will only dwell upon the good things that he has done, for example, Salāh, tilāwah, tasbeeh, and so on. In other words, he will only consider the good deeds that he was expected to perform and see whether or not he has performed them. He will never ponder

over the deeds that he was supposed to refrain from, such as watching television, backbiting, looking at non-mahram persons, etc. Such things that he is expected to avoid are never taken into account. For example, a person might have spent his day performing all his fardh Salāh, fasting and tilāwah of the Qur'ān, but at the same time he involved himself in backbiting, looking at non-mahram women and various other sins. At the end of the day, when he reflects on his actions, he will consider himself successful because he will only see the virtuous acts. Shaytān and nafs will make sure he overlooks the sins he has committed. This is how Shaytān and nafs deceive us. They let us perform a few good deeds but at the same time involve us in committing various other sins. We are then misled into being satisfied with the performance of the good deeds while we forget the sins.

EFFECT OF COMMITTING SINS

Sadly, this is often our state in the month of Ramadhān as well. It is deduced from a Hadeeth of Rasoolullah ﷺ that when one spends the day or night in 'ibādah but also commits sins during that time, then these devotions go unrewarded. Rasoolullah ﷺ has also said, "Many of those who fast, obtain

nothing through such fasting except hunger; and many of those who perform Salāh during the night, obtain nothing by it, except the discomfort of staying awake. " (Ibne Mājah)

From this Hadeeth we can deduce that in spite of fasting all day, we will gain nothing because we do not stay away from evil and sin in that state. Similar is the case of one who spends his night in 'ibādah but does not refrain from sins, such as lying, backbiting, missing Fajr Salāh, etc.

The consequences and effects of committing sins are so great that they destroy good deeds. Rasoolullah ﷺ has stated this about one particular disease: "Abstain from hasad (jealousy), because hasad devours good deeds like fire devours wood. " (Aboo Dāwood)

WHAT IS 'HASAD'?

Hasad is that condition of the heart which desires the destruction of some quality or bounty that somebody has been blessed with by Allah. The 'hāsid' (jealous person) is not usually concerned whether the bounty falls in his share or not. For example, if someone has 'ilm, honour, wealth, beauty, piety or any other good quality, a jealous person will always yearn for those things to be lost or ruined and probably desire them for himself. Jealousy may seem very trivial to us, yet

its effects are devastating! This, however, should not be confused with 'ghibtah', which means to see some bounty in someone and desire for the same without wishing its destruction from him/her.

Hence, the first thing we must endeavour to do in Ramadhān is abstain from sins. Optional 'ibādāt are important too; but more than that we should make effort to keep away from sins. May Allah give us all the tawfeeq to practice this. Āmeen.

TELEVISION AND VIDEO

In Ramadhān, if we take a look in our societies, we will find that even in Ramadhān, television and video continue to entertain many families. We are all aware of the harmful effects of television and yet in the month of Ramadhān, when the Rahmah (Mercy) of Allah ﷻ descends on earth like heavy rain, the television remains switched on. During heavy rain, a person will get soaked wet even if he was to walk only a few yards. Similarly, as the Mercy of Allah ﷻ is descending upon us in abundance, if we take only a few steps towards acquiring this Mercy, it will not leave us deprived. However, anyone who is busy watching television, is depriving his home of this limitless Mercy. The television and video act as an umbrella which prevents the Mercy of Allah ﷻ

descending upon the home and the inhabitants. My humble request is that you make a firm resolution to remove televisions and video recorders from your homes for good.

There are yet other families who, although abstaining from watching television during the month of Ramadhān, record all their favourite programmes and watch them as soon as Ramadhān is over! To record programmes on video in the month of Ramadhān is also a grave sin. In addition, we make du'ā in Ramadhān and repent for our sins and make a promise to Allah ﷻ not to commit sins again. If we record programmes to view later, then we are showing by our actions that we are only refraining from sins during the month of Ramadhān and we have no intention to do so afterwards. We have no sincerity, for as soon as Ramadhān is over and Allah ﷻ brings us the day of 'Eed – the day of happiness – we shall once again begin to commit sins and disobey our Creator. How dangerous is this situation!

TOTAL REJECTION OF SINS

We must save ourselves from sins completely. Consider the month of Ramadhān as a training ground to instill good habits which we can continue throughout the year and beyond. I request my

brothers and sisters, with all sincerity, to make a firm intention to refrain totally from all sins; in particular, to keep away from backbiting, vulgar language, arguing, fighting, anger, etc. Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "If anyone abuses him (the person who is fasting), then he should say, 'I am fasting. '" (Bukhāri, Muslim)

We should value this month and keep away from all the things which bring the Displeasure of Allah ﷻ.

SPENDING TIME IN DEVOTION

After saving ourselves from disobedience, we should try to spend as much time as possible in 'ibādāt i.e. zikr, tasbeeh, nafl Salāh, tilāwah, etc. If you have any qadhā Salāh, then spend your time completing them. Make intention of i'tikāf every time you enter the masjid. We need to value our time and spend it in doing good. Therefore, we must exert all our efforts to devoting every precious second of Ramadhān for the worship of Allah ﷻ.

This is the season for gaining rewards. Consider the following example and try and learn a lesson from it. During the months of Hajj, the shopkeepers in Makkah and Madeenah direct all their energy towards their businesses in order to gain maximum profits during what is thought to be an exceptionally busy period. Some shopkeepers will even sleep in the

shop so that they do not miss out on the business that the pilgrims generate. They are aware that once the Hajj season is over, trade will slow down for another year. By putting all their efforts into these months, they earn profits sufficient for the rest of the year.

Similarly, Ramadhān is the season for earning rewards for the Hereafter. Remember that once these thirty days are over, gaining rewards will not be that easy. In this month, not only does it become easy to perform good deeds but also the rewards of these deeds are manifold. For each nafl act one gets the reward of a fardh act and the reward for a fardh act is multiplied by seventy. We must, therefore, spend as much time as possible in 'ibādah. ۞

GUIDELINES FOR THE MONTH OF RAMADHĀN

1. We must wake up for suhoor as it is a sunnah of our Rasool ﷺ. He has informed us that the food of suhoor is full of barakah: "Eat suhoor, because in it lie great blessings." (Bukhāri, Muslim)

   We should arrange our time for suhoor in such a way that we are also able to perform at least 4 to 8 rakʿāt of tahajjud together with duʿā for about 15 minutes or more. Rasoolullah ﷺ has said that the duʿā in the darkness of the night (after tahajjud) is readily accepted by Allah. (Tirmidhi)

2. The ideal way to perform tahajjud with suhoor is to wake up early and perform tahajjud and make duʿā before suhoor. Everyone in the house should wake up and engage in ʿibādah in the darkness and isolation of their own rooms. Shed tears and ask Allah ﷻ for your needs just as a small child cries and gets his needs fulfilled. Rasoolullah ﷺ has encouraged his followers to cry when making duʿā.

   Crying and weeping attracts mercy. Just as a mother who, upon seeing her child crying for a sweet, will succumb at the sight of the child's crying and treat it with mercy, similarly when one sheds tears whilst beseeching his Lord, the Mercy of the Lord will enshroud him.

PROFIT FROM RAMADHĀN

3. After tahajjud and suhoor, we must pray our Fajr Salāh with congregation. Ladies should also perform their obligatory Salāh.
4. After Fajr remain engaged in ʿibādah till15-20 minutes after sunrise and perform 4 rakʿāt ishrāq.
5. Before zawāl, perform Salātud-Dhuhā (chāsht). Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "There is charity due upon you in lieu of every joint that exists in your body. To say *sub'hānallah* is a form of charity, to say *alhamdulillah* is also a charity, to say *lā ilāha illallah* is also a charity, to command goodness and forbid evil is also a charity, and two rakʿāt at the time of dhuhā (chāsht) is sufficient for all this charity (i.e. to compensate the favour of every joint that Allah ﷻ has given you)." (Muslim)
6. Perform Zuhr with congregation. If possible, engage in ʿibādah for a while and have a short rest with the intention of qayloolah – a Sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ.
7. Perform ʿAsr. The time between ʿAsr and Maghrib is very valuable especially for duʿā. We must make the effort to perform our ʿAsr with congregation

and then remain in the masjid until Maghrib. Unfortunately Shaytān and nafs have deceived us so much that many of us cannot do without food in the masjid at the time of iftār. My friends, we should try to change our habits and keep the Ākhirah in our minds. Shaytān and nafs will take us home for some food, which should only take a few minutes, and will not let us come to the masjid until just before Maghrib. This is the best part of the day, which we do not value, only because of our desire for food. Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "There are three groups of people whose du'ā is not rejected; the fasting person until he breaks the fast........" (Ahmad)

When Allah ﷻ has made a promise through His Prophet ﷺ, there is no doubt in the acceptance of these supplications. In spite of this, we find some people whose prayers are not answered. This does not mean that their prayers have been rejected. It is Allah's ﷻ Favour upon us that should He find that granting us what we ask from Him is in our interest, He grants, otherwise not.

Another point to remember is that there are certain conditions in the absence of which they may be rejected. Among these is halāl food and making du'ā with attention and concentration. If

our hearts and minds are not in our du'ās, then they may not be answered.

My friends, we must make the habit of bringing a few dates with us at the time of 'Asr, and after 'Asr we must engage in dhikr, tilāwah, tasbeeh, etc. until just 10-15 minutes before Maghrib, when we should raise our hands in du'ā until Azān. In this way, everyone will be engrossed in their own 'ibādah and we will find that if some of the individuals are crying, others will also get the inclination to do the same. Therefore value this time between 'Asr and Maghrib and do not waste it in worrying about food. The saintly people are such that not even gold and silver will distract them from the Worship of Allah ﷻ, let alone food. Their concentration in their du'ā is not affected even if heaps of treasure were to be placed before them, whereas, we would not be able to concentrate if only a small morsel was to be put in front of us. I would request my sisters not to spend the time between 'Asr and Maghrib in the kitchen.

8. After performing Maghrib, we should perform 6 rak'āt of awwābeen after the two rak'āt sunnah and two rak'āt nafl of Maghrib. However; those who do not feel inclined to do this, some 'ulamā

have said that two rakʿāt sunnah and two rakʿāt nafl of Maghrib can also become part of the 6 rakʿāt awwābeen. Hence, performing only two rakʿāt after the sunnah and nafl of Maghrib will suffice.

9. After food prepare for ʿIshā Salāh and go to the masjid. Perform ʿIshā Salāh and tarāweeh. The sisters should note that 20 rakʿāt tarāweeh is sunnah mu'akkadah for them too. They must perform tarāweeh after ʿIshā.
10. After tarāweeh, go straight home. Do not loiter around outside the masjid wasting time. At home, remain in ʿibādah until you go to sleep. Sleep with the intention of waking up for tahajjud and suhoor.
11. Apart from the above, we know that in Ramadhān there are always various programmes taking place in the masājid led by our ʿulamā. These are for our own benefit. There are many of us who are very sinful and during this month our hearts are softened and more receptive; by listening to the wise words of our ʿulamā the chances of bringing good deeds into practice are greater. Although the month of Ramadhān is solely for ʿibādah, we should try and attend these programmes in the masājid because by listening to these discourses, inshā'allah, changes will come into our lives for the better. Our hearts are blackened by and full of sins and by listening to these discourses and sitting in the company of the ʿulamā and the pious, change will definitely occur in our hearts, inshā'allah.

NOTES:

- The household should sit together daily at a specified time and read from Virtues of Ramadhān compiled by Shaykhul Hadeeth Muhammad Zakariyyā ﷺ for at least 15 minutes. This will create a good atmosphere and environment in our homes and at the same time Ramadhān will pass joyfully with an abundance of barakah in the home, inshā'allah.
- Whilst in the masjid engage yourself in ʿibādah. Take great care not to get involved in any worldly talk. It is very upsetting and disheartening to see people wasting their time in futile talk in the masjid, even during the month of Ramadhān. Try and restrain yourself and remain engaged in ʿibādah.
- Perform iʿtikāf of the last ten days in the masjid. Sisters may perform iʿtikāf in their homes.

Rasoolullah ﷺ used to perform I'tikāf in the final ten days of Ramadhān. (Bukhāri, Muslim)

- Recite as much Qur'ān as possible during the month of Ramadhān
- Du'ā, istighfār and tawbah should be made in abundance throughout the blessed month.
- Intermingling with people should be decreased to a minimum.
- Everyone should try to take rest in order to conserve energy for the compulsory 'ibādah. There is no point in remaining in nafl 'ibādah and not getting rest, which will result in tiredness and laziness at the time of compulsory salāh, etc.

Allah's ﷻ Mercy is in abundance throughout the year, but especially during this month. We should yearn in our hearts for this Mercy because we need mercy, blessing and forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. We are sinful and in this month we want to win Allah's ﷻ Attention so that we can become His Beloved Slaves. If we are eager to perform good deeds then, inshā'allah this month will become a month of great blessing for us.

May Allah ﷻ accept our efforts and make every moment of this month a means of receiving His Mercy, Blessing and Forgiveness. May we all be granted a place in Jannah. Āmeen. ۞

IMPORTANT DIRECTIVES FOR THE BLESSED MONTH

This booklet is concluded by quoting some important directives given by the great scholar in the field of Hadeeth, Shaykh Muhammad Badre 'Ālam رحمه الله:

The blessed month of Ramadhān comes but once a year, and this is a month bestowed with a lot of blessings. One of its special qualities is that if this time is spent in righteous devotion then the blessing of this month will remain for the full year, and if this time is, unfortunately, wasted negligently then no blessing will remain until the next Ramadhān. Because of this, all my Muslim brothers and sisters should make a programme for the month of Ramadhān in which, according to inclination and opportunity, they set aside a special time for devotion.

1. As one awakes for suhoor, and by eating prepares for the following day, similarly, one should consider it necessary to prepare spiritually for the same period, by performing at least 8 or 12 rak'āt of tahajjud, and if there is time, by sincerely reciting *Sub'hānallāh, Lā ilāha illallāh, Alhamdulillāh, Allāhu Akbar*, and Istighfār. These five phrases should also be recited regularly after each of the five fardh Salāh. This should in earnestness,

be the daily schedule. In the second ten days, devotion should be increased, and in the last ten days, devotions should be further intensified as the chances of Laylatul Qadr falling in these nights are greater. For obtaining the reward of this virtuous night, if possible, the whole night or most of the night should be spent in tilāwah (recital of Qur'ān) and reciting of Kalimah Tayyibah, Kalimah Tamjeed, Kalimah Tawheed, Istighfār, Tawbah and performing Salāh etc. During this time there is no objection in taking food and drink or discussing religious matters to assist in staying awake, but it should be borne in mind that by staying awake, the Fajr Salāh should not be jeopardised. For these devotions, sacrifices have to be made; for instance to stay awake one should eat less. To eat, one has the remaining eleven months. Anas ﷺ relates: Once, with the approach of Ramadhān, Rasoolullah ﷺ said, 'On you has come such a month in which there is a night which is superior to one thousand months. That unfortunate person who has missed this night has deprived himself of all good and only that person is excluded from the bounty of this night who is in fact very unfortunate.' In many

Ahādeeth, mention has been made about the auspiciousness of this night.

2. During this month of blessings, Kalimah Tayyibah, Durood and Istighfār should frequently be read even whilst sitting, walking etc. This month is important for the tilāwah of Qur'ān, for it was revealed in this month. It is our duty to read Durood on Rasoolullah ﷺ, and this should be read and repeated as many times as possible.
3. Fasting during this month is just as obligatory as the five fardh Salāh. Muslims should not be neglectful towards the fasts of this month and they should be more mindful of the five fardh Salāh. More attention must be given to tahārat (cleanliness), performance of Salāh with congregation and abstention from sins in this month.
4. In this blessed month, it is more important to stay away from evil than to do good deeds. One should endeavour to save the eyes, ears, tongue, heart and all parts of the body from the slightest sin. One should especially refrain from slander and harmful talk. Kindness, good manners and the Remembrance of Allah are the ornaments of

this month, and these should not be destroyed by vulgarity and bad manners.

5. This is the month in which sympathy should be shown to the needy and poor. Therefore, one should give as much as can be afforded towards sadaqah (charity), iftāri, sehri etc, and preparation should be made for the Hereafter. It is stated in the Hadeeth that anyone who provides a fasting person with iftār, it will assist him in having his sins forgiven, save him from the fire, and he will receive as much reward as the person who has fasted. When giving charity, it must be clearly borne in mind that one's intention should be free of attaining fame and publicity, for this will nullify the reward. A good method of giving in charity is to send some money at the end of every ten days with the intention of reward to the homes of the poor and needy (those who do not go out to beg). In this way one could sympathise with them.

6. On the night of 'Eed, one should make an effort of staying awake, and knowing that it is the end of the blessed month, should ask for whatever one wants and seek forgiveness for one's sins. Similarly on 'Eed day, one should use miswāk

and 'itr, and change into clean clothes. All this should be done with the intention of observing Sunnah and not in imitation of non-believers. If, unfortunately, on this Islamic occasion one takes part in cinema shows and places of evil, then it so much resembles the ways of the non-believers that it is difficult to call it an Islamic festival. The happiness of Muslims on this day should be because of the completion of the important devotion of fasting. Contrary to this, on 'Eed day, Muslims are indulging in all sorts of unlawful activities. How wonderful will it be if Muslims could show other nations what a true Islamic 'Eed should be!

NOTE: With regard to Ramadhān, Shaykhul Hadeeth Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyā ﷺ has written a book entitled Fadhāile-Ramadhān (Virtues of Ramadhān) in which he has selected Ahādeeth with translation and commentary. It is important to obtain and study it, so that it inculcates a yearning for devotion during this blessed month. ۞

RULES REGARDING FASTING

Fasting is to refrain from eating, drinking and cohabiting from subha sādiq to sunset with the intention of observing fast. Fasting in the month of Ramadhān is one of the five pillars of Islām and is fardh upon every Muslim who is sane and mature. It has many spiritual, physical, moral, and social benefits, the greatest of which is that we become pious and God-fearing.

Fasting will not be valid without intention. It is not necessary to express the intention in words. However it is preferable to recite *Allahumma asoomu laka ghadan* (O Allah, tomorrow I shall be fasting for You only). In the case of Ramadhān, it is better to make niyyah in the night. However, should a person fail to do so, then it is permitted to make the niyyah during the day before zawāl (midday).

SUNNAHS IN THE MONTH OF RAMADHĀN

1. To observe tarāweeh.
2. To increase the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān.
3. To observe i'tikāf during the last ten days of Ramadhān.

MUSTAHAB (DESIRABLE) ACTS IN FASTING

1. To eat sehri (the meal before subha sādiq).

2. To delay the sehri up to a little before subha sādiq (early dawn).
3. To break the fast immediately after sunset.
4. To break the fast with dates. If dates are not available then with water.
5. To recite this du'ā at the time of breaking the fast:

   Allahumma laka sumtu wa bika āmantu wa 'ala rizqika aftartu

   O Allah! I fasted for You and in You do I believe and with Your provision (food) do I break my fast.

THINGS THAT DO NOT BREAK THE FAST

1. To eat, drink or indulge in cohabitation in forgetfulness.
2. To vomit without intention.
3. To vomit intentionally less than mouthful.
4. To have a wet dream.
5. To oil the hair.
6. To use surma (collyrium) in the eyes.
7. To drop water or medicine in the eyes.
8. To clean teeth with wet or dry miswāk (a stick used for cleaning teeth).
9. To apply or smell 'itr (perfume).

10. To swallow a fly, mosquito, smoke or dust unintentionally.
11. To swallow one's saliva or phlegm.
12. Water entering the ears.
13. To take an injection.

THINGS MAKROOH (DETESTABLE) WHILE FASTING

1. To chew items such as rubber, plastic etc.
2. To taste food or drink and spit it out.
3. To collect one's saliva in the mouth and then swallow it.
4. To clean teeth or mouth with tooth powder or toothpaste.
5. To complain of hunger or thirst.
6. To quarrel, argue with filthy words.

THINGS THAT BREAK THE FAST

1. To eat, drink or indulge in cohabitation intentionally.
2. To burn agarbatti (incense) and inhale its smoke.
3. If water goes down the throat while gargling.
4. To vomit mouthful intentionally.
5. To swallow vomit intentionally.
6. To swallow something edible, equal to or bigger than a grain of gram, which was stuck between the teeth. However, if it is first taken out of the mouth and then swallowed, it will break the fast whether it is smaller or bigger than the size of the grain.
7. To drop oil or medicine into ear or nose.
8. To swallow the blood from gums with saliva. However, if the blood is less than the saliva and its taste is not felt then the fast will not break.
9. Snuffing.
10. To eat and drink forgetting one is fasting and thereafter, thinking that the fast is broken to eat and drink again.
11. Smoking.
12. To apply medicine to the anus.
13. For women to apply medicine to the urinary organs.
14. To swallow intentionally a pebble, piece of paper or any item that is not used as food or medicine.

In all the above circumstances, only a single fast will become qadhā except in the case of number one (1), where qadhā and kaffārah both will become obligatory. (Consult an ʻālim regarding the rules of kaffārah).

PERSONAL TIMETABLE